

NATUROPATHIC PHYSICIANS LICENSING EXAMINATIONS
NORTH AMERICAN BOARD OF NATUROPATHIC EXAMINERS
FEDERATION OF NATUROPATHIC MEDICINE REGULATORY AUTHORITIES

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Naturopathic Physicians Licensing Examinations (NPLEX) has founded in 1986 to provide a uniform licensing examination for all jurisdictions that license naturopathic physicians in the United States and its territories and Canada and its territories. NPLEX is currently used by **all** jurisdictions in the USA and Canada that license and regulated naturopathic physicians.

The North American Board of Naturopathic Examiners (NABNE) administers NPLEX to qualified candidate and certifies that all applicants are currently attending and in good standing, or have graduated from a Council on Naturopathic Medical Education (CNME) accredited program in North America. Currently accredited naturopathic medical education programs are National College in Portland, Oregon, Bastyr in Kenmore, Washington and San Diego, California, Southwest College in Phoenix, Arizona, National University in Chicago, Illinois, Bridgeport in Bridgeport, Connecticut, Boucher in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canadian College in Toronto, Ontario, and Universidad del Turabo in Gurabo, Puerto Rico (candidacy status). NABNE also establishes the rules around examination eligibility, coordinates with CNME and oversees the testing sites currently used.

NPLEX does a practice analysis for each of its examination areas on a five years rotation. This ensures that examination items are current with the medical literature and with what candidates are learning in their respective naturopathic medical education programs. The practice analysis findings determine the content of the blue print for the NPLEX examinations.

NPLEX topics for part one medical sciences examination are anatomy, physiology, biochemistry, immunology, and microbiology. Candidates at a CNME accredited program who have completed all academic requirements through the end of year two may take part one examinations. All examination items are case based with five to seven questions related to the case presented. The emphasis of this examination is on knowledge basis required to enter clinical training and safety.

NPLEX topics for part two clinical sciences examination are differential diagnosis (physical and clinical), laboratory diagnosis including imaging, botanical medicine, pharmacology, clinical nutrition, emergency medicine, physical medicine, health psychology, research, and homeopathic medicine. All candidates must have graduated from a CNME accredited naturopathic medicine program. Several jurisdictions in the USA and Canada also require minor surgery and acupuncture as add-on examinations. All examinations items consist of a case followed by five to seven questions that encompass several of the above topic areas appropriate for that clinical case. The

emphasis of NPLEX is on candidate knowledge and safety to enter practice as a licensed naturopathic physician.

The Modified Angoff Method is used to determine the pass rate for each examination administration. This is the same method used by medical, osteopathic, nursing, and chiropractic licensing examinations in the United States and Canada. A team of already licensed and practicing naturopathic physicians, cut scorers, takes the examination, evaluate each item's difficulty and determine what percentage of minimally competent candidates should pass each item. The cut score is used to determine the minimum score required to pass this particular examination administration. NPLEX uses a complex statistically algorithm to determine the pass rate and has several consulting statisticians to assist in this process. After each examination is administered the NPLEX Board of subject experts reviews the entire examination and determines if the correct answer was keyed, and if additional answers need to be keyed due to errors or confusion in the items that may have misled the examination candidates. A central committee makes the final decision based on the experts' findings. Examinations are rescored, the cut score results are reapplied, Type I and Type II errors are examined and corrected, and final exam reports are provided to the candidates.

NPLEX has a complex process of developing new items for each examination administration. Examinations consist of approximately 50% old items for which we have valid statistics and approximately 50% new items. New items are solicited tied to our development of specific cases. Items are vetted by the local examination board of experts for content correctness, they go to the NPLEX office for grammatical formatting to match the rest of the NPLEX language and to remove double negatives and the presence of more than one concept per item. The items are then reviewed by the entire NPLEX board of experts in a face-to-face meeting to ensure each item is closely and correctly tied to the clinical case. There is a final grammatical review, the examination is again proofread, and produced for administration. NPLEX offers two examinations per year, February and August.

Prior to the establishment of NPLEX each licensing jurisdiction produced and marked its own set of licensing examinations. This process meant that candidates who wanted or needed to move to a new jurisdiction, had to rewrite their medical science and clinical examinations. Now that NPLEX is used across North America this process of application and rewriting examinations is not necessary. If a candidate or naturopathic physician wants to move to a new jurisdiction they simply apply to the new jurisdiction and write that jurisdiction's jurisprudence examination.

The Federation of Naturopathic Medicine Regulatory Authorities (FNMRA) mission is to protect the public by connecting regulatory authorities and promoting standards of excellence in the regulation of naturopathic medicine in North America. This organization has a database of disciplinary actions taken by each member jurisdiction, and is a central location for laws, continuing education requirements, licensing requirements, scope of practice, and formulary and prescriptive authority for naturopathic

physicians. Its membership includes the licensing jurisdictions in the United States and Canada.

In summary, North American's naturopathic physicians students and graduates from CNME approved schools have had uniform and statistically based examinations since 1986. NPLEX part one is taken after completion of year two requirements. NPLEX part two is taken after completion of year four requirements and graduation. The examinations are informed by rotating practice analyses for all subject areas. NABNE administers the NPLEX examinations. FNMRA tracks scopes of practice, continuing education, and disciplinary action for member jurisdictions.

Respectfully submitted,

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